GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS

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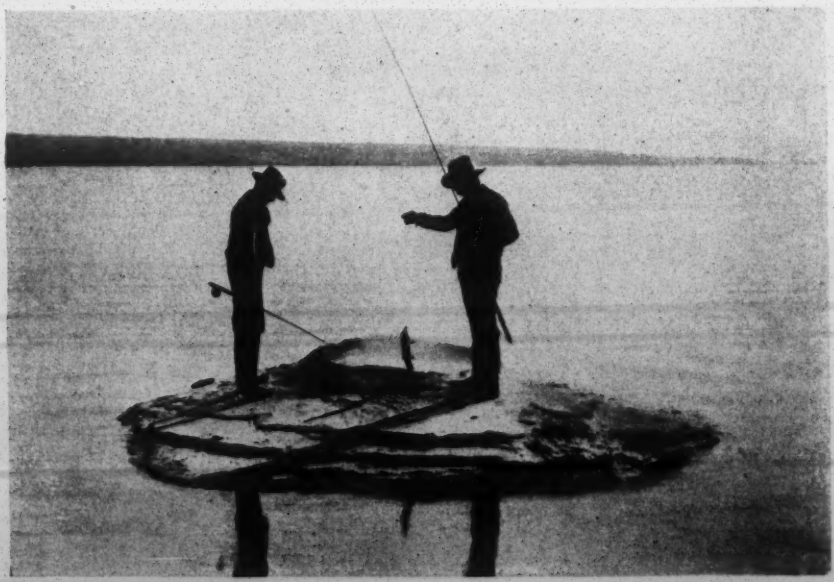

© *Haynes, St. Paul*

NATURE SUPPLIES LAKE, TROUT AND COOKING POT IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

(See Bulletin No. 3)

HOW TEACHERS MAY OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

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The Strait of Gibraltar, Which Has Been Conquered by a Woman Swimmer

THE ENGLISH Channel, the Catalina Channel off California, and now the Strait of Gibraltar have been crossed by swimmers.

Although the narrowest of these three, Gibraltar was conquered only within the last few weeks.

Gibraltar, famous rock and city, contrary to popular belief, is not Europe's nearest point to Africa. It is eight miles north of the nearest crossing. The fortified rock and town occupy a peninsula about six miles across the Bay of Algeciras from the neck of land on whose tip nestles the sleepy town of Tarifa.

The Pillars of Hercules of Ancient Days

Frequent ferries ply between Gibraltar and Tangier, diagonally across the Strait. They will continue to link the continents until a tunnel is bored under the Strait. One has been proposed, and the estimated cost of such a project is some $60,000,000. Such a tunnel would afford Spanish railroad connection with the new line from Fez to Tangier. One then might, in sleeping cars, reverse the crossing that Hannibal made with elephants.

Travelers who complain of the English Channel crossing would have even rougher going on the steamers between southern Spain and Tangier. An entering surface current from the Atlantic churns against a strong undercurrent flowing out from the Mediterranean, to the discomfiture of passengers and defeat of many swimmers.

From Gibraltar, on clear days, one can see Sierra Bullones, the "Gibraltar" of the African side. Gibraltar and Sierra Bullones were the Pillars of Hercules of the ancients. Through the angry waters between them, the Phoenicians, who were supposedly under the protection of a deity who guarded their transit, passed to and fro to bring back the tin from Cornwall which they cast with copper into bronze.

Board a ferry at Gibraltar to-day and soon you get a fine view of the 400-foot rock which, for two centuries, has been England's Mediterranean sentinel. Across the Gulf the tiny white houses of Algeciras dot the shore. Then, as the boat swings out into the Strait, ruined Moorish castles and the houses of Tarifa flanked by vast orange groves appear. To the south rise African peaks where Barbary pirates signaled for attacks upon ships as they sought to enter or emerge from the Mediterranean.

Ships of Many Nations Pass the "Neck of the Bottle"

The ferry is a good place to get a panorama of the flags of the world; for there is a procession of ships constantly passing this "neck of the bottle" which focuses the shipping of the western world, of the inland sea's own busy ports, and the numerous trans-Mediterranean cargoes which pass both the Strait and the Suez Canal.

Tangier, southern landing place for the ferry, reveals a new world after the brief trip. Lofty minarets flank huge domed mosques, silently proclaiming that the city still is Moslem, while its narrow streets, often sheltered so that the blazing sun finds only a slit, are crowded with turbaned Moors whose long, white burnooses drape their stalwart bodies from head to heel.

© Photograph by Flandrin

THE ROCK AND CITY OF GIBRALTAR AS THEY APPEAR TO A FLIER

The strip of territory to the left of the rock has been declared neutral ground by Spain and Great Britain. The top of the rock has been heavily fortified by Great Britain but the airplane and the submarine have made Gibraltar of less value as a fortress. All travelers on the air route from Toulouse to Casablanca, in Morocco, pass over Gibraltar and Tangier.

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Expedition to Hunt the Venezuelan Winter Homes of American Birds

AN "AERIAL" exploration that has no connection with aviation, but with bird life, is about to be launched in South America by the National Geographic Society-Carnegie Museum Venezuelan Expedition.

Ernest G. Holt, who will head the expedition, has been in Washington conferring with Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society, preliminary to the study of the first "good-will flyers" of Pan-America—such as the warblers and shore birds that summer in the United States and winter in Venezuela.

To Penetrate Unexplored Country By Canoe

These birds, the original American explorers, have their winter homes in areas of Venezuela which Mr. Holt's party will explore.

Mr. Holt will leave the United States from New Orleans where he will sail for La Guaira. In northern Venezuela he will bowl along in motor cars over the fine roads which the government has built to serve the inhabited areas of the Republic. But when he pushes into the largely unexplored areas south of the broad Orinoco he will take to canoes to penetrate the thickly forested country where one expedition lost lives, and explorers have been turned back by hardships of tropical travel. In the mountainous regions pack mules will be used.

Bird study is the major objective; but observations of the land, its animals and other life forms, and its amazing variety of tropical trees will also be made.

Birds flying blithely overhead seem, to the envy of landbound laymen, to have complete "freedom of the air." But birds have distinctive habitats, comparable to wheat belts and timber lines, and it is by exploring cross sections of these life zones that Mr. Holt hopes to make an exhaustive survey of the bird life of Venezuela.

The Strange Brilliant Birds Explorer Will Study

The bird explorer is interested in the origin of existing forms, in the distribution of species, and to arrive at these facts he must find what species now exist in given localities. North America knows some birds, the scarlet tanager, for example, which have originated in the Tropics but now are familiar to temperate climes. Certain of the West Indies Islands, which are remnants of a former continental mountain chain, are believed to have been the highways for the dispersal of various kinds of birds. Further studies will determine these and hundreds of other facts dear to the students of bird lore, which facts also may shed light upon the making and changing over of our continent at various geologic times.

In the course of his study Mr. Holt will amass photographs and collections of such wonder birds as the Scarlet Ibis with its brilliant red plumage which is the envy of the textile dye maker; the Cock-of-the-Rock with its curious double crest, formed of two groups of feathers pressed together; and the ungainly Jabiru Stork, with its white plumage and naked black head and neck, which stands higher than our Sandhill Crane.

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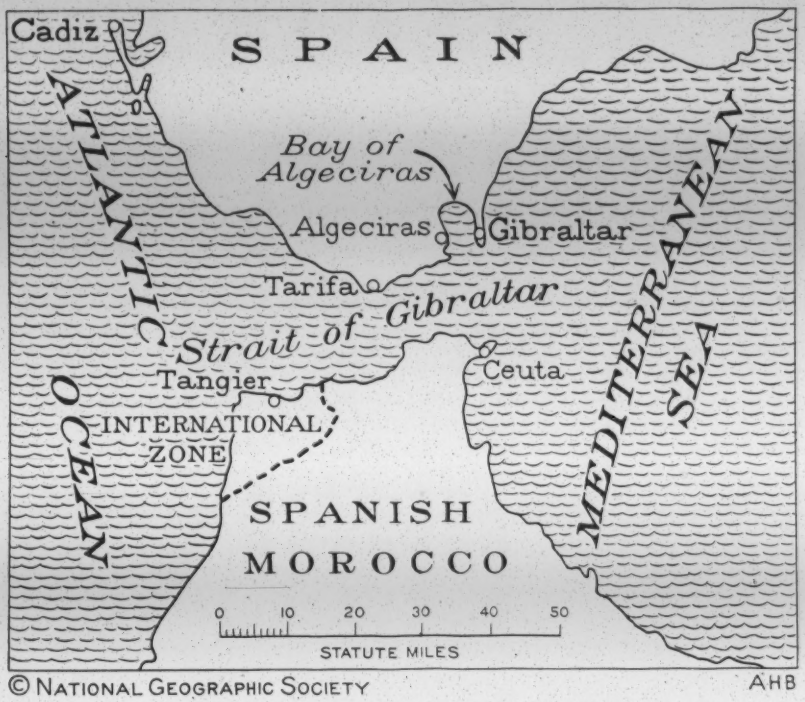

CHANNEL CONQUERED BY A WOMAN SWIMMER

Tangier has again been the subject of international debate. The city is now within an international zone, created with the approval of European powers and the United States. Tarifa, across the Strait, was once the stronghold of a famous pirate who levied toll on vessels passing in and out. His activities have given us the modern word "tariff."

Form for Renewal of Bulletin Requests

The next issue of the Geographic News Bulletins will be the thirtieth and last for the school year 1927–28. Teachers who are planning now for materials which they will need next fall may use the following application for the Geographic News Bulletins:

School Service Department,
National Geographic Society,
Washington, D. C.

Kindly send.....copies of the GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS for the school year beginning with the issue of....., for classroom use, to

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Address for sending Bulletins.....

City..... State.....

I am a teacher in.....school.....grade

Enclose 25 cents for each annual subscription.

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Our Fresh Water Fishes Are Popular Abroad

AMONG the most popular Americans who travel abroad are the Rainbow Trout, the Salmon, the Black Bass, and other well-known fish.

The United States can take pride of ownership in the many species of American fishes which have been successful in distant countries. Every year thousands of young fishes travel across the salt oceans by boat to Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Italy and other countries. The Rainbow Trout grows to prodigious size in New Zealand streams.

"The richness of fish life in our fresh waters is amazing," says Charles Haskins Townsend in a communication to the National Geographic Society. "The United States has a smaller area than Europe, yet it has nearly five times as many kinds of fresh-water fishes. We have about 585 species of these, while Europe has but 126 species.

Illinois Has Greatest Variety of Fresh Water Fishes

"We find that a single State may have considerably more than 100, the number known to Illinois being 150, while New York is credited with 141. It could doubtless be shown that our fresh-water fishery resources are greater than those of any other country.

"Many of the fishes commonly taken for food or in sport fishing, and naturally of wide distribution, have, as a result of fish-cultural operations, been established in sections of the country far removed from their original habitat.

"A fish belonging to the Mississippi system or to the Atlantic slope often takes full possession of a new watershed, as the result of mere transplantation of limited numbers.

"Although the numbers of fishes caught by anglers do not figure in statistics of the catch made for market, they are not without high economic and other values. Most of the northern States are visited in summer by tourists interested primarily in good angling waters.

The Call of the Wilds Is the News of Good Fishing

"Lakes far and wide have become summer resorts for people who find much of their recreation in fishing. Railways and summer resorts widely advertise the resources of their waters. Summer visitors, moving actually by hundreds of thousands, carry into these States millions of dollars. The trade in angling equipment alone is extensive.

"Who can measure the health and esthetic values attendant upon the angling idea? Someone has recently asserted that the angling habit is conducive to long life, and, beginning with Izaak Walton, who lived to be ninety, presents a lengthy list of celebrated fishermen who lived well into the eighties and nineties, many of them prominent in the literature of American angling.

"Fresh-water fish culture in the United States has been carried on for more than fifty years in steadily increasing volume, in the effort to keep pace with a depletion by fishery industries that constantly threaten exhaustion of the fish supply.

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Venezuela is a happy hunting ground of the ornithologist because of its variety of climatic and physical zones, ranging from mountain peaks that pierce the sky at some 17,000 feet to the low plains along the Orinoco. There also are arid regions, where the cactus and thornbush hold sway, as in our own West; the llano country, carpeted with grasses and scrub trees; and the vast, humid and swampy delta of the Orinoco bordered by mangroves.

Future Source of the World's Timber

However, the unexplored area, lying between the Rio Caura and Rio Branco, is a region of dense forests. In these forests are scores of kinds of trees, wood from which some day will be as highly prized as mahogany, walnut, and teak are to-day. The chicle is there, already of economic value for its gum, but providing also a beautiful, deep wine-colored wood which has been known to endure for hundreds of years.

Mahogany has forged ahead of other tropical woods in popularity partly because it floats, and thus can be removed from otherwise inaccessible forests. But as the world's timber demands increase, ways will be found to transport many other tropical woods to civilization centers, and dense forests which now are called jungle will become prized commercial timber stands.

The area to which Mr. Holt goes lies just north of the Brazilian border, and east of the region where, near the town of Esmeralda, the giant basins of the Orinoco and the Amazon so overlap that the flip of a bird's wing may determine whether a drop of rain will reach the sea at the Orinoco's delta, or flounder half way across the continent to emerge at the island-flecked mouth of the Amazon.

"Mosquitoes are the Real Peril of the Tropics"

Mr. Holt is not greatly worried about jaguars, anacondas, and boa constrictors.

"I have recently traveled 16,000 miles through the interior of Brazil," he said. "By count we saw, in that distance, just eight snakes. Other experience in tropical America leads me to believe the jaguar will not harm the traveler unless the animal is molested."

"What then is your chief difficulty?" he was asked.

"Disease," he replied, "disease and its chief cause—insects. Mosquitoes are the real peril of the Tropics, while nine-tenths of the naturalists' discomforts are due to ticks, harvest-mites, fleas that burrow in the feet, and other parasites."

Bulletin No. 2, May 7, 1928.

NOTE: E. W. Nelson writing of "Bird Banding, the Telltale of Migratory Flight" which appeared in the National Geographic Magazine for January, 1928, tells of the adventurous work of trailing the swift flight of birds over the North American continent.

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Why American Plant Hunters Climbed "Africa's Everest"

TWO American plant explorers have returned from a trip in Africa to the edge of the ice fields near the Equator.

For the cause of American agriculture they climbed the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro which is the Mt. Everest of Africa. Kilimanjaro has been climbed for sport before but never for grass seed, which was the chief objective of the two plant hunters.

Kenya and Tanganyika colonies are famous for their great herds of big game. The government plant explorers hope that the grasses which support the African outdoor zoo may contribute some new varieties which will permit the raising of greater herds on our own western plains.* They have returned from the uplands near the Equator with a rich haul of seeds for experiment.

Mile Higher Than the Highest Peak in the United States

The mountain, 19,710 feet in height, is the crest of the "Dark Continent." It lies 200 miles from the Indian Ocean in Tanganyika Territory. This was formerly under German control; and one of the prized possessions of the German Kaiser is said to have been a paper-weight from the topmost pinnacle of the mighty mountain—the "Kaiser Wilhelm Spitze."

Kilimanjaro is in many ways one of the world's most notable mountains. Literally and figuratively it stands apart. Most of the earth's greatest heights climb, so to speak, on the shoulders of their fellows. But Kilimanjaro rises in solitary majesty from a relative lowland, a plateau ranging from 2,500 to 4,000 feet high. And it rears its snow-capped head in the Tropics almost directly on the Equator. It lies less than three degrees from that center line of the earth's heat belt. It is nearly a mile higher than Mount Whitney, highest peak in the United States proper.

Few natives ever climb up Kilimanjaro's flanks, and therefore few of them have ever seen snow or ice at close range. The white crest of the peak has been a mystery to them, and they have explained it by saying that the mountain has a silver top.

Kilimanjaro is a World In Itself

The huge mountain is a world in itself in the range of its climate and vegetation. At the top is its polar region; its high, cold, windswept ridges are like Siberia; below are heather-covered highlands resembling those of Scotland. Next down the slope is the rain-forest, a region of heavy precipitation, rank growth and soggy soil. Still lower are ordinary forests, followed by the "Temperate Zone" where most of the mountain's population resides. They are intelligent agriculturists, some of them practicing irrigation. Below the agricultural belt is a dry, scorched plain, a semidesert, to which few of the slope-dwellers ever descend.

Bulletin No. 4, May 7, 1928.

*The contributions of plant hunters to American agriculture are told in "A Hunter of Plants," National Geographic Magazine, July, 1919; "New Plant Immigrants," October, 1911, and "Round About Bogotá," February, 1926.

The Astonishing Catch in the Inland Sea

"The rivers and lakes of the United States have fishery resources that are unequaled elsewhere. The Great Lakes are virtually inland seas and the navigable rivers are among the largest in the world. The mighty Mississippi, with its tributaries reaching in all directions, fairly dominates the map of the country.

"These waters, with the rivers of the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and many lakes of the northern States, have been enormously productive in food for our people.

"In one year commercial fishermen alone have taken from the Mississippi River and its tributaries more than 96,000,000 pounds of fish, while the Great Lakes yielded more than 113,000,000 pounds.

"Large as are the food supplies of these two regions at the present time, they must have been vastly greater before the exploitation of their resources began. Unfortunately, there are no official records by which the extent of the earlier fishery operations may be measured.

"While the fish food derived from our fresh waters is vast in quantity, it is also notable in variety. There are many kinds of Trouts, Salmons, Whitefishes, Sturgeons, Pikes, Basses, Sunfishes, Perches, Catfishes, the Shad and the Eel, as well as the less important, but abundant and widely distributed Chubs and Suckers.

Fishes That Feed on Wrigglers in Demand Abroad

"In addition to the familiar food and game fishes, our waters are rich in Minnows, Darters, Shiners, and other small fry of no direct economic value, but of vast importance as the food supply of larger fishes. Every great watershed has its peculiar forms of these, all well-known to ichthyologists (scientists who study fish life) who have described and named them by the score.

"Some of our smallest fishes have been found useful in combating malaria and the annoyance caused by mosquitoes, and are even being shipped by the United States Bureau of Fisheries to mosquito-plagued foreign countries. There is now in progress much active investigation regarding the value of several species of fishes for the control of the mosquito."

Bulletin No. 3, May 7, 1928.

See, for its series of fascinating chapters on fishes of all kinds, "The Book of Fishes," by John Oliver La Gorce, and other authorities, published by the National Geographic Society. The volume is illustrated with color portraits of 92 fishes in action; 134 engravings; 243 pages.

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The New Hebrides, Which France and Britain Own Jointly

FRENCH journals have proposed that the partnership government of the New Hebrides Islands be dissolved. They suggest that France should give some colonial territory to Britain in exchange for complete sovereignty in the New Hebrides.

The New Hebrides Islands form a large Y in the South Pacific west of Fiji and north of New Zealand.

The inhabitants of this interesting archipelago, composed of 12 large and 100 smaller islands, believe in witchcraft and all sorts of signs and omens, particularly in the spirits of their departed ancestors and in gods which are thought to be incorporated in certain stones or animals. Every village has its dancing-ground. Here the natives meet on moonlight nights and perform wild and fantastic antics to the booming of their deep drums, some of which, six feet or more in height, carved from the trunks of trees, are capable of making terrible noises.

A Chief's Wife Takes Pride In Wearing 40 Skirts

One fantastic rite among them is the memorializing of their chiefs in effigy. A crude statue of clay and fibre, representing the flesh and hair of the chief as he looked in real life, is made, his actual skull being used for the framework of the head, and around this the festivities take place.

For years the natives of the islands were the prey of the "Blackbirders," or labor pirates, because they are generally considered more industrious and sturdier of build than the average Kanaka (native of the South Pacific). They are reputed to have cannibalistic tendencies, to be treacherous and of uncertain temper, facts probably due in some measure to the treatment to which they were subjected by these traders. They are of Melanesian stock, below the medium in stature, and accentuate the ugliness in their broad, black faces and receding foreheads by sticking coconut fiber in their hair and adorning their ears and flat noses with rings. They pride themselves upon their weapons—spears, clubs, bows, and poisoned arrows—some of which are beautiful in design and elaborate in pattern.

The women hold a degraded position among them. The wives of the more important members of the race increase the number of the skirts which they wear at one time as an indication of their rank. The chief's wife wears as many as 40 of them. The "better half" of a man is sometimes buried alive with her husband upon his death.

Gigantic Oranges and Mammoth Pineapples

Quiros, the Portuguese navigator, in 1606, was the first white man to see the rugged outline of the coast of the islands, which rise abruptly out of the deep sea in the hurricane zone of the Tropics. Believing he had discovered the great southern continent which was at that time the dream of navigators, Quiros may be compared to Columbus who thought he had found a route to India when he sighted the palm-fringed shores of the West Indies.

He called his discovery Australia del Espiritu Santo, which has been shortened by traders to Santo and is applied to the largest island of the group. Some of the other large mountainous and partly volcanic islands are Ambrym, Anei-

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© *Photograph by Carl E. Akeley*

A YOUNG ELEPHANT BROWSING ON THE UPLAND GRASSES

The great herds of elephants in equatorial Africa live in such plains as these and in the dense rain forests on the mountain slopes. Huge herds of many kinds of animals live on the upland plains of Tanganyika and Kenya colonies. Heavy crops of grass and scrub are necessary to support these animals, just as heavy crops of grass were necessary to support the herds of buffalo on our western plains. American plant explorers have been searching the equatorial uplands of Africa recently for new varieties of grasses which may contribute to agricultural development of the West (see Bulletin No. 4).

tyn, Aurora Api, Pentecost, Eromanga, Malekula and Tanna, the home of the "great lighthouse of the Southern Isles," Tanna Volcano, which bursts forth brilliantly every three or four minutes.

Countless streams cut Santo, which is 64 miles long and 32 miles wide, into broad, fertile valleys. From its shores and those of the neighboring islands tons of copra are sent to Sydney, Australia, and shipped from there to soap-makers the world over. Coffee, cocoa and vanilla, as well as tropical fruits, grow in abundance. Oranges are said to grow so large that both a man's hands can scarcely span one of them, and the pineapples of the islands sometimes weigh 20 pounds. The soil is rich and the vegetation luxuriant. . .

© *Photograph by Captain Harry Pidgeon*

A HAMIL GROUND IN THE NEW HEBRIDES ISLANDS

Despite the work of missionaries many natives of the New Hebrides cling to pagan worship. Their hammered-out tree-trunk idols give forth strange sounds when beaten during a ceremony. Carved tusks of sacred pigs hang in festoons from the wooden figures.